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Humblefults of Friendliness

ONE WOMAN'S EVERYDAY PHILOSOPHY

Mary Branks Picken





Thimblefuls of Friendliness

By Mary Brooks Picken

One Woman's
Every-Day Philosophy



Woman's Institute of Domestic Arts and Sciences, Inc.
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The sincere appreciation of the student body
of the Woman's Institute makes this book a
reality, and to them, individually and collec-
tively, it is affectionately dedicated.

The Understanding Heart

Treasured Always

EMERSON wrote, "Oh, the comfort, the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person—having neither to weigh thought nor measure words, but pouring them all right out just as they are, chaff and grain together, certain that a faithful hand will take and sift them, keep what is worth keeping, and with the breath of kindness blow the rest away."

How many people do we know who are like that? How many have we ever known with whom we felt entirely free, with whom we could think aloud, with whom we could talk without being misunderstood, challenged, or discountenanced. But how we do cherish those friendships which have for their basis that perfect understanding which makes guarded expressions and tedious explanations unnecessary.

Nothing influences the soul for good more than an understanding heart. In my life the finest example of this is a great uncle, the good man who brought up my mother. It was not his experience in living, his money, nor his ability that caused my grandmother to ask him, her brother-in-law, in his youth, to look after her six children when she knew the end was near. It was because she knew his heart that she left him such a trust. He accepted it and never married, but devoted his life to bringing up these children. My mother was the baby, and when she grew up and married, this dear old uncle lived with her and my father.

Many remarked on the unselfishness of this man, on how much he, as an individual, sacrificed in giving his life to these, his older brother's children. But he never seemed to sense any sacrifice, and no man ever had children or grandchildren of his own who loved him more devotedly than did my brothers and sisters and myself.

He was the only elderly person in our family, aside from my grandmother, and when I see old people outliving their usefulness and being tolerated by their children, when I see middle-aged people growing older and considering only their own selfish interests or inclinations, I realize more and more the greatness of the man we lovingly called Uncle "Like."

Many times we children actually cried for disappointment because, by agreement, it was the privilege of another one that day to lead this dear, feeble, dim-eyed man to dinner or supper. Often we tried to buy turns from the younger ones with pennies, colored cards, or candy, because to do a service for this treasured old man was the happiest thing in the day.

When relatives came to try to persuade him to visit them, we children would not leave him, for we knew that, when he sensed the pain his going would cause, he would not go.

Though he was very frail, no one ever heard him complain. He was never too tired to tell a story, and when he turned his story so that the moral of it touched upon a wrong we had done that day, our shame was too great to remonstrate. The closer we cuddled to him, the more definitely it assured him that we would never do such a thing again.

Often, as a little girl, I thought of him and what it was about him that we all loved so much. As the years pass, I realize that it was his understanding, his concern of our feelings, his appreciation of our weaknesses. When we were rebuked at school, were "spelled down," when we stubbed our toes, skinned our knees, it was his often unspoken, understanding friendliness that helped us adjust ourselves to the humiliation or the pain.

The Understanding Heart

It was his interest in our good grades and his excuses for our poor ones that made us run to him with our report cards and led us to be honest in reading the percentages, which he could not see. It was his understanding, greater than pity, less selfish than love, that made us feel free to tell him that we were afraid to put the worm on the hook when fishing and ask him to do it, to feel free to go to him with an empty cup when wild-strawberry hunting and confess that the reason we did not have any was that we had eaten all we picked.

His friendship was sure; 'twas a stable thing. We knew his kind humor would be the same when we got home from school as when we hurried away in the morning. We almost always ran a race on the last hundred yards to get home first to tell him the happenings of the day, always knowing that he would defend us in the right, help us to right the wrong, tolerate or subdue us when we were selfish or bigoted.

This uncle has been gone many years; yet even now, when our family are together, we talk of him longingly, for the principles that he believed in are in our hearts, and his friendship still inspires and directs us.

He never scolded nor spoke unkindly, never criticized; yet we knew that his standards meant that every piece of candy, every apple, should be equally shared; that a lie never could be hidden, that we must confess before we could be absolved. When we were in trouble, he was willing that we should hide behind his chair, but his lap always invited us to come around front, and we knew that the only way we could do that was to tell him all about it.

The life of Uncle "Like" to me is proof that good does not die. The influence of an understanding heart will live forever because through such influence comes the permanence of life and love.

Counting Aright

Measure Birthdays by the Heart

WHEN are we old? I know two women—one whose birthdays number seventy, the other, thirty-three. The seventy-year old one reads, studies, enjoys, goes when she can, delights in a new dress, has a host of friends, and is genuinely happy. And folks just make excuses to visit her because of her keen interest, her joy in good news, her mental alertness, and her wholehearted friendship. The little school girl, the grandmother of eighty, the boy home from college, the new daddy, all go to see her for contact with that current of friendship that helps them to believe in themselves and stimulates within them a new interest that is joy in itself.

The woman of thirty - three is married, and has "enough to do without that." "No, I didn't read about it; books don't interest me much." "No, I don't read the papers; you never can tell whether they're telling the truth." "Oh, that's all right for those girls that aren't married, but I'm too old to be interested." "Yes, I like music, but I'm too old to take lessons now." Imagine! And only thirty-three!

When do we stop? When does the etiquette of age bid us stop learning, stop being interested, stop growing in mental attainments? Surely, not until we shut our own minds and hearts against the idea.

What can we give our friends when we have shut all doors and put in storage all desire for progress? Nothing. Just nothing. And friends are entitled to more than that. Friendships, to remain permanent, must grow and thrive on interest in the new conversation, on growth in ideas, achievements, and mental alertness. But if we go mentally to sleep, we become parasites on our friends, and surely

our friends have problems enough. We cannot carry them, and we have no right to expect them to carry us. And no matter how many birthdays we have, we can be made young again by a new realization that mind development, intelligence, and the ability to make progress are matters of interest, not age; of incentive, not years; and that we must build our own generating plant and work to achieve, to grow, to learn, to find good everywhere, to find delight in the every day.

* * *

I know of a woman who at forty made her burial clothes, stinting herself and doing without things she really needed in order to buy them. For thirty-eight years she took these garments out of her best bureau drawer, cried over them, and reminded her family of how great their loss would be when she was gone. After the thirty-eight years, when burial time came, a whole new outfit had to be provided, as the original ones were too small. So the only use these things ever had was to give her something to cry over and an outlet for her own self-pity.

Perhaps this practice is all right for those who must shed their own tears, but it surely isn't a very progressive or interesting way to use up life. Some people treasure life so much that they are afraid to use it, but with life, as with happiness, the more we use the more we have, for where is there a calendar or a clock big enough to mark for any individual the length of his day?

So let's forget the years and realize for our very own selves that our fountain of youth, our joy-well of living, our power to do things, lies deep in our own hearts, where neither years nor handicaps can interfere. We—you and I—are the only ones who can dip deep enough to get the full value of every day. So why cheat ourselves?

THE days in summer, when even the lanes, let alone the asphalt, send up their rays of heat, make us all feel that we should like to be lazy. But have you ever noticed that the laziest people always evidence more perspiration and less interest than the folks who are tidy, neat, and clean, and definitely interested in doing something or going some place?

And, after all, why should we let our whole plan of living be upset just because of a few hot days? It is poor management that keeps one in the kitchen the whole of a hot afternoon; poor management that keeps one two hours getting dinner; and poor management that prevents one from having happy afternoons outside and outings now and then. And poor management comes chiefly from lack of foresight.

I know one woman who made a beautiful hand-hemstitched dress—the only one she had for summer—and spent hours of time in hemstitching it. It was lovely for church and afternoon affairs, but for the all-day holiday, no. And she had used up all her time making this one dress and had to keep her family home all summer because of “nothing to wear” that was suitable for other occasions.

Another woman said, “O, I couldn’t go in the afternoon. You know we have our big dinner at night and that takes all afternoon.” But we all know that a little good management in the morning would have made it possible for her to get even the “big dinner” in forty-five minutes.

Some folks go, year in and year out, on a routine schedule, taking the days as they come and using all the time they have in just “doing the work.”

Summer time is a good time to get out of such a rut. Put a little novelty in the day, find a way to have appetizing foods without spending the whole day in the kitchen, and plan to have smart and attractive clothes without taking weeks to make them and hours to launder them. Every woman should complement herself by being her own efficiency expert and should plan her days so that she can have a little recreation now and then.

There is no tonic so good as to forget the habitual plan and hurry for a trifling cause, such as, for instance, getting ready on the spur of the moment for a care-free little jaunt or a picnic with the children. Try it sometime and see for yourself how happily comfortable your heart will be when, after a day in the open, you pull your tired muscles into bed and declare that you really enjoyed yourself better than you thought you would.

So long as we are interested in other folks, we can have a good time ourselves, for they will be glad to join with us in planning joyful, innocent fun that helps in keeping us well and happy. In the winter, we have books, pictures, concerts, and indoor visits to keep us alert and interested, but all of these things seem rather like canned vegetables in garden time when the mountains, the forest, the streams, and even the stars bid us visit them.

The Spirit of Prayer

Child Faith

MAY-DAY celebrations held in the little village near my childhood home were eventful affairs, at least for little girls. Well do I remember one time when May Day was coming nearer and nearer and my sisters and I had no new hats for the occasion. My mother had been ill and we could not worry her about hats; yet we could not go to the May-pole party without them. But the enthusiasm of our faith came to our aid and we prayed eagerly and earnestly for new hats.

We dreamed about them, we talked among ourselves about them, and we even pretended as we went about our household duties—and we thought then that the entire management of the household depended on us—that we were wearing beautiful new hats, that we were at the May-pole party. We did all the imaginable pretending and dreaming of little girls and—we prayed. Our every thought was a prayer for those hats. And, besides, we kept our faith, never once questioning that the hats would arrive in ample time for the celebration.

On the night before May Day, we prayed most earnestly and with full assurance; and on the morning of the first of May, while we were out helping pull away straw from around some strawberry plants and the time was growing closer to May-party time, we again decided to pray for the hats we so much desired; so, in perfect confidence, we bowed our little heads. Our prayers were humble and sincere, and as earnest and as fervent as our little lips could make them.

I shall never forget the unspeakable joy that came to us later when we looked up, for, coming over the brow of the hill, we saw our good father carrying a real, "sure enough" hat box. We had to wash our hands before we

could touch the three hats it contained; and, oh, such haste with the washing! There was our prayer answered right before us!

The hats had been sent to us all the way from Illinois by a dear auntie, and they were truly the most beautiful hats we had ever owned. And coming as they did—we knew that we had not mentioned our great desire to any other than our three selves and that our prayers and our dreams were in secret—we adored them, we fairly revered them every time we put them on.

As grown-ups, we haven't the child faith in miracles, but we know the supreme power of right. We enjoy the confidence of earnest effort rewarded, a confidence that urges us on and on to individual victories. Emerson says: "Him we account the fortunate man whose determination to his aim is sufficiently strong to leave him no doubt."

* * *

Always a sweet quietness comes into my heart when it is prayer time in church, or when I hear little folks' good-night prayers. Surely little children taught to kneel in prayerful spirit start aright, for through the stillness that surrounds them all else can be excluded but the recognition of the divine power that guides, guards, and encourages those who believe.

A philosopher of my acquaintance, when asked his opinion, said, "Why, yes, certainly I believe in the efficacy of prayer; and even if it had no greater power than to quiet one's thoughts and help one to start anew, it would be a wonderful thing."

I believe in faith in God as a great principle, and especially because it is the safeguard of the human race. If we did not believe in the protecting power of an unseen force, we would not peacefully lie down at night and lose

The Spirit of Prayer

consciousness in sleep, for it is chiefly our belief in the safety of our loved ones and ourselves that makes this possible.

I do not believe in supplication, in begging that we may be granted that for which we pray, but I believe in recognizing the power of God to help man face clearly his actual needs and then to express openly an earnest desire for them. To seek good for the sake of good is virtuous, and worthy reverence is always present in sincere

prayer, which, even when unspoken, is an expression of faith and kindliness. Such prayers are always answered and often more fully than is anticipated. Learning to eliminate all but the totally essential from one's wishes helps greatly in the sincerity and efficacy of prayer.

In the words of the old hymn,

"Prayer is the heart's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed,
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast."

Honest Purpose

The Road to Progress

ON MY desk stands a most comforting calendar quotation—a calendar that Lady Mary Davies, of England, sent to me. The inscription reads:

Whate'er the hidden future brings,
Is helped by hands divine.
Through all the tangled web of things,
There runs a clear design.
What, though the skies are dark today,
Tomorrow's may be blue,
When every cloud has rolled away,
God's providence shines through.

Some one seeing this and catching an optimistic remark that I made, said: "You are a cheerful sort of fatalist—you just seem to know that everything will come out all right." This was a rejoinder I did not expect, and I had to hesitate a little before admitting that I am inclined that way. But, in defense, I made a declaration to the effect that I never let Fate paddle alone in Mr. Wish's leaky boat. I learned long ago that a happier, safer ride could be had in the good substantial boat, "Honest Purpose," especially when I was helping with the oars. I do actually hold that clouds roll away and that God's providence becomes evident, for I believe, not as a "new thoughtist" but as an earnest thinker, that Good is more powerful than Evil and in every circumstance Good will eventually assert itself. I say, always, that sincere desire is unworded prayer and that if we are earnest and have an honest purpose, our prayer will be answered, and answered wholly in accord with our own sincerity and unselfishness. Wishing for things and praying for them are vastly different.

Every day is ours to mold as we

will. If we waste it in idle wishing, we must pay. If we build for the future by being faithful to our desires, we lay paving stones that make a safer and more comfortable road for the rest of our lives.

I know a man who had never learned to read. An accident crippled him, and for two years he was miserable. As he said, "All I did was 'set and set.' " He couldn't get around, and he didn't know what was going on. His little boy with school books aroused his interest, and then his desire for contact became so great that he not only learned to read, but studied and worked until he passed examinations that fitted him for the position of engineer, which he now holds. He says that he is grateful for his accident, because he had to start his own engine going, and he finds that there is much more fun running God's engine than even the very biggest steam locomotive "on the line."

I used to think that "laying aside funds for a rainy day" meant only money; but I have learned that there are several kinds of rainy-day funds. Knowledge of any constructive kind, any educational or humane hobby, is a rainy-day fund. It makes life interesting, develops appreciation, and teaches us the virtues of fidelity to honest purpose. Pioneering children along life's pathway establishes at least a contented heart with which to visit on rainy days, just as does being a good neighbor. Every day we should accomplish something in a constructive way. Study, work, thinking—they all help to roll the clouds of inappreciation away and to let God's providence shine through.

"Live Life Today"

"As Though Today Were All"

TO appreciate today fully, we need to call in an old friend of ten or fifteen years ago, talk over old times, go back over happenings of past years. In doing this, we are sure to look back with a little pang of regret and in our hearts admit that the bygone days and hours were very precious.

We treasure these days in memory. Yet when we had them we did not for a moment realize what blessings we held in our very hands. We were continually peering into the future, planning for "the coming of our ship" or "the death of the rich uncle." We missed the joy of the day in our curiosity about what the morrow would bring; we fretted because it detained us and held us back from the future.

Ten years from now, when a friend of today comes in to "reminisce" with us about bygone days, we shall look back and think these pretty fine days. So, why wait to be reminded? Let us remind ourselves and do as Douglas Malloch bids us:

"Live life today as though today were all—
As though this very morning you were born.
Your yesterdays are days beyond recall;
Tomorrow does not come until the morn.
Rest not upon the victories you have won;
Because you lost, surrender not to fear.
Your yesterday was ended with the sun.
Tomorrow has not come. Today is here."

About the best way to prevent yourself from getting peevish about every little thing that comes up, to lose completely the habit of having your feelings hurt when no hurt is meant, is to visit in a house where every individual is finding as much fault with the others as he possibly can.

Those folks who whine and complain about little things forget all about them when a big trouble comes and rarely go back to the little worries again. Let's not wait for a big trouble. Enjoy, be happy, and remember that only the big things should worry you.

Little souls know little of heaven, no matter how much sun shines on their path. So why be little, peevish, or fretful? Learn to appreciate each individual day as it appears and to hunt for the good in it. Every day has a value of one hundred per cent. If we get only twenty-five per cent., we cheat ourselves and every one around us, for surely we prevent them from getting their full share when we fail to use all our own. Let's make every day yield interest on its one hundred per cent. value, and we'll have enough happiness to share with friends, especially with members of our own families.

Company dispositions are like fat ladies' corsets—always more comfortable when worn continually.

Thoughtlessness—

The Seed of Regret

I HEARD a young mother say recently, "If our boy gets well, I'll never again complain of scratches on the furniture, finger marks, or child untidiness, for with him here such things could never matter again."

I saw a woman for the first time meeting death in one she loved dearly. 'Twas her first full realization that at least to the material there is an end. It surprised her, startled her. "Why, I never even thought that mother wouldn't always be here, and to think I quarreled with her about the way she combed her hair and about her not fastening down her supporters."

I came upon a girl in deep thought and quite carelessly said, "A penny for them." To my surprise, she spoke up and told me just what she was thinking, how she had allowed a good friend to drift away through sheer carelessness—hadn't written, hadn't been to see her, hadn't even heard about her for a long time. Her indifference had cost her the joy of a precious friendship and besides had caused her many lonely moments of wondering as to whether or not the friend would ever understand and forgive.

In greeting a young girl, I asked: "And how is Lou?" She looked quite blank and then said, "Oh, gracious me! I haven't seen her in years." I could not resist asking why, because only two years before this girl and Lou were inseparable, were together night and day.

"Don't you miss her?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes, but she's busy and so am I, and I guess she's just forgotten and grown careless as I have."

Yet here was a friendship that seemed so sincere, so fresh, and buoyant enough to last always. Friendship blasted in youth is like the breaking

of a young, stalwart tree that is full of promise.

I once knew an old man, estranged from his brother for forty years over a selfish act on his part, who tottered in and asked permission to sit inside the door at his brother's funeral service. Life was over for one and nearly over for the other. Self-centered ambition had kept them apart for half a lifetime to the gain or happiness of neither.

Once in a while it is well to stop and think what we give to our friends. Are we the kind who take and take and who forget that a friendship, to grow to be as sturdy as an oak, needs equal sharing?

Self-importance is one of the most dangerous things I know. It can destroy homes, friendships, and future contentment for more people than any other one thing. And what does it all amount to anyway? If you yourself are busy giving and doing, you won't have time to sit down and reckon how big an "I am" you are, to be slighted, hurt, or imposed on. There is no record anywhere of any one's losing by loving, and there is yet to be found the unselfish person who has no friends.

* * *

I remember seeing in New York a highly amusing play, called "The Show-Off." It was tragic in its reality, for all of us know people like the man in the play who was continually making a show of "my house," "my car," "my money," "my everything," while his poor family were working, saving, doing without, that he might "my" everything on the place. When you hear a woman talking about "my house," "my garden," "my chairs," you may know that she has little else to talk about.

When a family own everything mutually and think and plan for things in terms of "our house," "our party," "our happiness," it's almost sure to be a

Thoughtlessness—

happy, contented family, especially when they use the “my” only in relation to duty or responsibility.

Stevenson says, “Better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser,” and surely the same is true of our affections. It’s better to give generously than to store up where time and disposition will shrivel them to nothingness.

I think, if I were a minister, I would take, some beautiful Sunday morning, the text:

WHAT DO WE GIVE?

And, after reasoning all the points well, my conclusion, I know, would be, “Unless we can give of love, we have no right to life, let alone friendships or the love of others.”

Every Woman's House

Her Castle

NOT long ago, I went to visit a woman who lived in what she called her "little shotgun house"—three rooms straight in a row like the barrel of a gun—first the parlor, then the bedroom, then the kitchen and dining room, the division here being simply suggested by the table at one window and the stove near the other. Never have I been more sincerely and joyously welcomed, and never have I seen a cleaner house, nor two happier persons than my friend, Ella, and Jim, her husband.

Ella is a plump little creature with a generous waist line, made even more generous-looking upon the occasion of my visit by a bountiful checked gingham apron, the border of which was ten or twelve inches deep and represented three pairs of doves, each carefully worked in cross-stitch with white thread. I had not seen such an apron in a long time; it was like accidentally running across a treasured trinket when housecleaning or when hunting for something else.

Ella had several different patterns of these aprons, which she showed to me with much pride and appreciation.

She wore the apron over a spick-and-span clean dress, faded from washing until it was neither white nor colored. Her hair was drawn back into a smooth knot, while two sidecombs joined forces with the hairpins to keep every stray lock in place.

The very clumsiness of the fat, chubby hands enhanced their dependableness as I saw them turning the worn collar and wristbands on Jim's shirt, and then busily fixing the evening meal and washing the dishes while Jim and I sat in the kitchen and looked on. I felt as if they could be very, very comforting hands, and when the fingers gathered round a plate or a cup, their every movement told of

appreciation, realization, and contentment.

Ella had used her Sunday dishes because I was there, and with great pride she showed me her sixty-three piece set, explaining that one nicked saucer and a crack in one cup were the only breakages she had had.

Jim earns a nominal wage running an elevator, their two children have married and gone, and here these twin-hearted souls are living on, happy and proud of each other. They have found richness of life. When ten minutes after six came, Ella was eagerly listening for the one step that spelled completeness of life for her. Her Jim was there—he was hers completely and entirely. She believed in him more than in herself because her mantle of affection made him the living embodiment of all manliness. Jim could not possibly deceive her, for there was a simple, perfect understanding between them.

A man recently wrote in a book about his visit to Emerson during the great philosopher's last days. This man pictured the frailties evidenced by this world-loved old man a few weeks before his going away. My senses fairly ached as I read. Just seeing Emerson should have made this man big enough to have gone away and forever silenced his tongue on the memory and forgotten everything except the greatness of his own privilege.

I do not want to err, as I feel this man did, in telling you of the visit with my friends Ella and Jim; rather, I want to write clearly enough that, should they read this, they will realize that clean poverty is like the fire of God, and that contentment, confidence, and sincere belief in another are the greatest of the great possessions. I might go to sumptuous homes and be

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consumed with desire for luxuries, but theirs is a home where the beacon light of love glorifies its very humbleness.

When I look from within myself at these good friends, their simple little house, their unaffectedness, I rejoice in their peace. No matter to them if storms roar outside or the street-car men strike or the papers cry "hard times." These two people will love on, trust on, and daily grow more firmly attached to God and Truth. For love, the kind that endures, the kind that they know, has God's benediction. A splendid house is not necessary for the happiness of these good people. They know no conveniences, yet they have peace within.

They know industry, kindness, and love, and these have provided treasured wealth for them.

The other night I read Robert Herrick's "The Master of the Inn," and I felt, were it possible, I should like to write a book and call it "The Woman of the Home," where I would place the woman of every household on the same pedestal of unselfish devotion that Herrick put this great master.

A woman, according to her love and energy, can make her home an abode of peace, a place of protection from the winds of the world, a castle for her love, and a shrine to her own womanliness. God made women to help men, so He gave them the greater devotion.

Be Grateful

Let Us Not Forget

ABOUT the only time we ever stop to realize how glorious it is to be well enough to go and come as we will is when we are indisposed for a day and have to stay at home. Funny thing the way we accept good health as a matter of course, just like good drinking water or hot coffee for breakfast! We never think how seemingly necessary it is until we are deprived of it.

It's a pity that we take so much for granted—our food, our clothes, a bed to sleep in—why, of course, we have all of them. But go roughing it some time and sleep on a sparse, ill-equipped bed for a night or two. You will then appreciate, as you never did before, your own good bed at home.

We all grow so used to having things done for us—this is taken care of, that is looked after—that we get out of the habit of doing them for ourselves. But let the paper boy forget to leave the paper just one evening, and we are lost completely. We would insistently help to get him “fired” from his route; yet day after day, sun or rain, he brings the paper, and we are conscious of its importance only when we miss getting it just once.

* * *

Habit causes us to accept family, friends, comforts, and pleasures as a matter of course. Every now and then we should find ourselves without them all, just to learn to appreciate them the more.

I have heard it said that no girl can ever truly appreciate her mother until she has children of her own and finds herself loving, planning, sacrificing for them. Then she can understand how her mother felt and will be grateful and humble and appreciative in proportion.

I told a little nephew the other day to say a good-night prayer for a friend who was ill. The little boy, who was once very ill himself, lifted his bright, happy face and said, “Aunt Mary, there must have been a lot of prayers said for me, ‘cause see how well I am. I know mother’s prayers helped doctor because he knew what to do without anybody telling him.” It was wonderful to see the appreciation in the child’s eyes, a kind of appreciation that is even more than gratitude.

I have always felt I could be grateful for charity, but I could appreciate love and kindness. And that is what we need, it seems to me, more than anything else—to be kind, to leave folks alone who want to be alone, to help, encourage, and comfort those who need us, to say a happy word when a happy word is wanted, but never to be guilty of doling out kindness as we would plant beans, never more than the specified amount.

* * *

Not long ago I was in Philadelphia, and I visited Independence Hall, Betsy Ross’ House, Congress Hall, and other landmarks of our great independence. Everything there reminded me of the sacrifices that were made for our freedom, comfort, and well-being, and I wondered a dozen times and more whether we appreciated it all as we should or whether we were in the habit of accepting it as we do the daily paper, forgetting how much real effort had gone before to give us our many great privileges. If, deep in our hearts, we are grateful in proportion to the good that is ours, then we are sure to know a kind of Peace and Thanksgiving that can make us kin to all the world.

This Passing Moment

The Essential One

"This passing moment is an edifice
Which the Omnipotent cannot rebuild."

THE realization of this does not daunt nor discourage me, but makes me appreciate, as never before, the utter preciousness of the moments of every day. Time, like youth, is most valued when it is past, and with thinking people that should not be so. We should learn to live so as to appreciate the days as they greet us and to get from each one the greatest possible benefit.

A long time ago, I caught myself thinking about yesterday and tomorrow and not about the day and moment in which I was living, and as I looked around, I found that many others were doing the same—looking into their pockets and feeling that they were paying for yesterday and at the same time straining every nerve to peep over the transom into the rooms of tomorrow.

Since then I have tried and failed often, but started anew many times to use today as best I know so that there will be no regrets.

This does not mean that I work every waking moment. I often have play times, but the play hours generate the best work that I do, for they are almost invariably happy hours and days, and therefore, storing-up days, when I unconsciously make ready for a big day of constructive doing.

I have found that the most productive way in which to use the moments constructively is to approach them with an open heart and mind, unburdened by self-pity, self-depreciation, or ego-tism.

Not long ago I traveled into another state to see a girlhood friend who had just lost a much-loved little daughter. This mother has a good husband, two fine boys, a pleasant home, and many comforts. The little girl who had gone, was ten years old, a wholly lovable creature. As I sensed the loss of the child, I could not help turning my thoughts back ten years, especially as the mother repeated so often, "Why, we had everything for our little girl, and had planned so much for her education and training."

Before this little girl was born, the mother came to me evidencing much unhappiness. How could they ever afford this baby? They had their home to pay for, and the husband was just beginning in his business. The coming of the baby was as a calamity, the mother suffering all the possible pangs of poverty, trying to figure out how this one little child could be fed and clothed. Her worry, of course, proved needless for the physical comforts were provided and the little girl won her way into their hearts so that her loss brought overwhelming pain.

My mother friend is a typical example of human nature. We worry when good approaches and experience pain when it leaves us. We are not permitted to see into the future enough to know what is bad and what is good in the joys and sorrows that come to us. So we should learn to accept things with the venturesome spirit of youth—receive them at face value and refuse to worry about anything that does not represent a definite loss to the heart and soul.

Beauty Spots

Cleanly Simplicity

WALKING down the street the other day, I saw a shabby little doll on some half tumbled-down steps and a little girl five or six years of age with a worn-out broom, energetically sweeping the ground. I watched her as I came near and I remarked, "My, but you are a good sweeper." She lifted her little face and said, "I's making a clean place for my dolly and me to play at."

This is a beautiful thought, expressing one of the most essential threads in our garment of life—"a clean place for my dolly and me." If every woman would only love her family as this little girl loved her dolly—enough to keep things clean for them—life would be different for her and for those she should treasure.

The woman who loves her family enough to tidy herself up for their home coming, who provides a clean table and attractive food, if possible, for her family to eat, who happily keeps her floor swept clean, is building for herself in the hearts of her people tender memories and appreciation, which, though not expressed, will reflect in their lives over and over again and will help them in being kind and lovingly considerate of some one else. And, after all, that is the way rewards should be expressed. They should travel down through the years to serve as good examples.

Some women say that they haven't anything to do with, but the only people that I have ever known who didn't have anything to do with were those who did not have the desire to do. There are people living now who can tell of the dugouts out in Kansas before there was lumber or money there to build houses. These dugouts were caves in the ground with dirt floors, but many a time I have heard folks tell how cozy they were and how very clean

and smooth the earth floors were kept. The women had no conveniences, yet they built happy hearthstones and gave a good start to their children. Kansas is a great state, and much of its greatness today is due to the love and unselfishness of its far-visioned pioneers.

I once visited a woman who lived in a box car on a railroad siding. A new piece of railroad was being built, and her husband was supervising engineer. A cleaner little place I have never seen, a soft cream color inside with white curtains on the four windows that had been cut in the sides of the car. The furniture, except the bed, table, and stove, were made from boxes painted in cream color and finished by means of white scarfs and curtains. Blue denim covered two trunks and several boxes, which served as seats. A box of pink geraniums was in each window, having been carefully packed and carried from the city.

She happily told how some of the men who worked on the road would come and ask to look in because " 'twas all so pretty."

I asked if it was difficult to keep the scarfs, curtains, table cloths, and bedding white, and the answer was: "Yes, quite a problem, but not so difficult as to do without them."

The husband of this little woman is going forward to a splendid success. They no longer live in the isolated region nor in the box car. I have often thought, as I have heard from these people, that this treasure woman is a true example of the old quotation: "Many women are like candles, finding their brightest moments serving others. 'Tis they who joyfully consume themselves in lighting the way for their loved ones."

"Give that ye may receive," is instruction that we hear, forget, and fail to heed; yet application of it can

Beauty Spots

mean literally picking up a life of happiness instead of misery. Give smiles if you have nothing else. Give encouragement, good cheer. Make beauty come to you through your desire to express it. Your thoughts, deeds, motives, acts, industries, and desires—all can express beauty if

beauty is in the heart; all can give happiness if love is the carrying vehicle.

Sweep a clean place for you and your loved ones to “play at.” Learn to love people and their little ways—odd, queer, or lovely. Love folks and your work, and you will be doing a big part of what God wants you to do.

Happy Thinking

Our Point of View

HAPPINESS is such a big, generous, understandable word that I really delight in using it. I sat the other day, feeling much depressed, and unconsciously my pencil wrote *H-a-p*, and then it seemed the other letters needed to spell *happiness* just naturally connected themselves to these first three letters. When I glanced at the paper and saw the word complete, I was interested. I was not conscious of having written it.

The word and its effect reminded me of a similar circumstance that a friend told me about. This friend had gone to bed thoroughly discouraged and burdened with self-pity. As she was lying there, magnifying every conceivable discomfiture, she heard a member of the household arguing with a man who had a big cartload of sand to deliver, the man insisting that the sand belonged at her number. She looked out of the window and saw the sand, and her sense of humor immediately became evident. Sand! That was exactly what she needed, a mental sand tonic to stimulate her appreciation and to increase her tolerance.

The sand was delivered at a corresponding number in the next block, but the driver, unknowingly, had accomplished a good deed, for the humor of the situation brought smiles, and smiles always eradicate worry wrinkles.

Recently I visited a very good friend who had lost her daughter and whose son had moved across the continent.

Knowing this mother's great affection for her two children, I dreaded conversation with her. I said, when starting, that I would do almost anything rather than go. But I went and I stayed three whole hours. We talked about fruit, flowers, the school problems, and we discussed our cherished authors. Then we talked of astrology and astronomy, of God and nature. I never had a more delightful visit.

I came home feeling happier and more enthusiastic than usual. But when I arrived there, the folks began to sympathize with me, thinking that I had spent an unpleasant evening. Then I remembered how I felt when I started out. Was it possible that this delightful woman had so recently known a great grief! As I thought about it, I marveled at her power of adjustment, her poise, her command of herself. She, a cultured woman, capable of the finest feelings, had endured so much! But she was my hostess, and she felt it her duty to make me happy, and in doing it she was benefited, for she verily radiated happiness and good cheer.

Happiness needs no trifling accessories, for it is in itself omnipotent. It takes hold in the heart, builds its nest, and brings forth its own birds to sing for you. Think of the happy women you know, and you are sure to find them the busiest. Idle women have time for hate and envy, slights and misunderstandings.

Goodness Not Enough

Give From the Heart

THE first and great step necessary to live rightly is to be charitable and tolerant, to love the teachings of life and love, to believe in God; and the next and most tedious step is to back up that belief by actual doing. As a little poem that comes to my mind says:

Who does his task from day to day,
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing Truth needs have it so,
Has found true greatness here below.

To be good, industrious, kind, and true is to be happy, and happy, kindly folks are always the joy of a household and the foundation of right family life.

Jesus was thoughtful, not of Himself but of those around Him. He did not grieve nor resent his tasks, but worked faithfully, persistently, and agreeably for the comfort and peace of others.

The mother who complains of her tasks and grumbles at the sometimes thread-bareness of her life, leaves an indelible mark on the sensitive mind of a child growing up, a mark that may take years of perseverance in living to eradicate. If mothers could only see this at the time and realize the burden of such resentments, life, even if tedious, would be greatly more precious.

If all the mothers and sisters, and all those women not blessed with children could realize that they can radiate happiness in their own homes, that they can send the other members of their families out into contact with the day's activities invigorated and fit for a day's progress by being unselfish in their thoughts, inspiration, and service, the world would experience a renaissance such as has never been known in history.

The privilege of responsibility for

great men and women, for great political, civic, and moral life, centers chiefly in our womenfolk who feed the thought channels of the young.

It is not enough to teach children what is right or wrong; they must be inspired by seeing and appreciating right things. The greatest problem of education is the development of personality, which comes through an understanding of life and through love that makes for human sympathy, and this can and must be brought about through the avenues of right interest.

The minister of a church, the teacher in school, represent the Heart Service of those institutions. The mother or homemaker in the home represents the Heart Service of the home, and this service of kindness, sincerity, helpfulness, and optimism should be as generously and happily given as is humanly possible. To build up an institution of good work and influence, individuals must be generous with tools, stone, and mortar. A stingy use of materials never made a great building; a stingy friendship never aroused the soul of man or woman.

Every woman's home is her business—a corporation with her at the head. This is both a great responsibility and a great privilege. The woman who smiles happily, who keeps bitterness out by the sweetness of her own thought, industry, and attitude, and who persistently and determinedly works for success for her own, will find it, for, as Longfellow says, "The talent of success is nothing more than doing what you can do well and doing well whatever you do without a thought of fame. When it comes, it will come because it is deserved, not because it is sought after."

Treasures

Yours and Mine

WHEN I was a little girl in the country, there used to be a big white house about a mile up the road from ours. There was a long driveway in front, beautiful trees all around, and evidences everywhere that those who occupied it were persons of means.

Our house was plain, for we were poor. We boasted only some tall poplars, a luscious honeysuckle vine, a beautiful grape arbor, and a half dozen bushes of old-fashioned yellow roses, but we were rich in health, happiness, and freedom.

I remember once when we were at the big white house for Sunday dinner. At home we had just an old organ with a broken pedal that you had to pump hard to make "go." But at the big house they had a piano, and after dinner, we all went into the parlor to hear the daughter play. In her pride of ownership, she cautioned my sister and me not to touch the piano, and she took a piece of velvet scrap to lift

the lid. That little piece of velvet made a tremendous impression on me. I wondered for days if all people of wealth touched their furniture with velvet and if the shades of their parlor windows were always drawn. But later I learned that the bigger people are, the freer they are with their treasures.

There was a woman who won her way into my heart to stay always because she let me hold her precious little baby one morning while she dressed to go to church. And an old man put a halo round his head in my estimation when he loaned me some treasured old books because he thought I would enjoy them. And he loaned them without even asking me to cover the backs.

I don't believe it will ever be in me to hoard things from others, for I have learned through joy and regret how wonderful it is to receive from others and to touch sacredly the things they treasure.

Catching the Bus

Selfish Success

I SAW a man run around the corner and across the street to catch a Fifth Avenue bus. He knocked off another man's hat and caused a woman to drop two packages; he crowded a mother with her little son as they entered the bus; he caught his watch chain on the door and broke it. When he had crammed himself into a seat and settled himself, he evidenced great concern about his chain, fingering it continually.

I could not help observing his restlessness. He was not sure that he was on the right bus, or of his stop, and had hurried so that he seemed unable to relax and to enjoy the trip. And worst of all, his mind was so perturbed that he could not see any one of the human beings who rode in the bus with him.

Thought travels miles in fifty blocks, and as the bus rumbled along, making the awkward stops and starts, I could not help comparing this man with folks I know who have made just such a run for the bus of success. They are heedless of all around them, have but one aim—to get there! They crowd on every side, trample down, and, when they arrive, find that they have broken every link in their own chain of human sympathy.

When they are seated, I wonder just how comfortable they feel inside. I wonder what the faces of others mean to them. I wonder whether they know any of the little secret runways to hearts or can find in the dark the switch of human contact that will make eyes bright with happiness.

Little Things

They Make for Big Ones

PINCHING oneself to feel the hurt is an all too common human frailty. I know a woman who denies herself every good thing in worrying about what ill could come. "Yes, the day is all right, but we need winter weather for good health. Sure to be a lot of sickness with the sun shining so bright this time of year."

"Yes, I'd like to go to the movies, but there is sure to be some one reading the lines out loud, and I can't stand that."

"Yes, that's all right for some folks, but if I did that I'd have a headache for two days."

"If *she* goes, I'm not going."

Folks like her just won't be happy, even when the chance is given them.

I once had a letter which fairly shocked me. A woman wrote the news of her family, then at the close said, "I'm praying every day that the world will come to an end and put us all out of our misery."

I thought, "Good gracious, I'm not ready for the world to come to an end, not by any means. Why, if I didn't take on another idea—and I truly am enthusiastic when it comes to good ideas—I could not possibly be ready for the end of the world for ten years yet. And ten years from now, I know I shall have the next ten happily planned, for I want to have all the happiness that is possible."

I have no intention of pinching myself to feel the hurt. Life is too full, too big; there is too much joy in the future for that.

* * *

I once saw an advertisement with a heading, "Noticed but not Noticeable," and it appealed to me as a good slogan for us womenfolks—a good guide in matters of dress.

No one wants to dress so as to be

wholly unnoticed, neither does any one want to be noticeably conspicuous, and this applies not only to dress, but to hats, gloves, shoes, and even perfume.

A gaudy pair of yellow gloves can make hands noticeably clumsy; a clean pair of white or gray ones will be noticed because of their clean freshness.

The indulgent use of perfume stifles, annoys, and is easily traced. A faint scent is delightfully mysterious—noticed always, but never offensively noticeable.

Often we hear: "Did you notice how becoming Eleanor's lovely frock was?" "Mrs. So and So's dress was noticeably in bad taste." "Jeanette's tie was noticeably gaudy." "Oh, yes, I noticed that exquisitely dainty collar, dainty enough to have been hand-made." "Did you notice Isabel's collar and cuffs? They were so jaunty and smart." "She would have looked very lovely if her shoes had not been so noticeably untidy."

The little things we often forget, but we should try to wear every detail of clothing so that, if noticed, it will be a credit, never a reflection. And a rule, perhaps more definite than all others, is that one should never, never wear anything that is noticeably unbecoming.

* * *

"If you have any roses for me, let me have them now" is a saying that has much merit. How quick we are to complain of faults, a little slight, a little thoughtlessness. A little grievance grows as we think about it and as we talk about it, and that we are sure to do. But let something good happen, something thoughtful, something that was a real help, and we accept it as a matter of course and say little about it. And day after day we go along accepting the good as a natural consequence with little appreciation, and then are

Little Things

ready to fight over the least little awkward or thoughtless thing.

We forget to say the good things about folks until they are gone, and then angels they actually seem. We never realized before how wonderful, how kind, how unselfish they were. We surround them with roses whose

petals fairly flutter with praise, yet nary a one would we have given them if they had lived and helped and befriended us in the unselfish way we recognize so clearly when they are gone.

So let's give the roses every day. A petal of cheer now is worth a dozen roses after a while.

The Value of Time

Every Hour Precious

THE Japanese proverb, "Be not lenient with your own faults; keep your pardon for others," is an exceptionally good one to remember when one is tempted to procrastinate.

A little after four o'clock the other afternoon I left my office, and as I went out I heard a girl say, "Oh, it is too late tonight. I'll get after it tomorrow." I walked scarcely a block down the street when I heard a young man say to another, "It's late now; suppose I do that tomorrow." I went directly to the office of a man who is one of the most successful men in our city and as a result one whose time is very precious. I mentioned some things that should be done. His answer was, "We will decide them right now." And as each point was brought up, decisions were made and progress with each problem became possible.

Lack of decision is the subtle germ of procrastination. It is always easy to go ahead after you have decided how you will proceed. For instance, to make a dress, you do not have to be seated at the sewing machine to decide the color, design, and decoration.

I should never be able to read or to study if I waited for time in which to accomplish it. My interest makes me utilize every moment. Recently I became particularly interested in a subject, procured the correspondence lessons regarding it, and set about to study for the information. I never found time at any one sitting to answer more than two questions. Often I would accomplish but one answer. I roughed it out on scrap paper and copied it later, and this plan gave me a review that was very advantageous.

We can accomplish anything that we have the necessary determination for—study, growth, progress of every kind—if we use intelligently and opportunely every available moment; and,

conversely, we can so overlook the value of time that, when a reckoning finally comes, we have only regrets and wasted opportunities to look back upon.

I know a woman with a family who, at ten o'clock in the morning, fifteen years ago, made a practice of saying that she did not have a thing to do for the remainder of the day. This woman is now saying she hasn't anything to do but worry because her daughters are ashamed of her. I personally know that the daughters are very unhappy because their mother has not progressed with them and other mothers they know. This mother casually looks at pictures in a magazine and is through with it. She has not read a book in many years, has no appreciation of pretty clothes, and no skill in making them. Her home is not attractive, and yet she worries because her children are not proud of her.

As a child, Washington wrote in his copybook, "Labor to keep alive in your heart that little spark of celestial fire called conscience." I have always felt that this mother should have labored to be conscientious regarding her own time and what she could accomplish with it. She has wasted a fortune in time alone and has had no happiness meanwhile, because happy hearts cannot stay with idle hands. To be happy inside, to grow in thought, to keep young, to be interesting, all of which are essential to success, one must fix the heart upon living every day, learning as much as one can, and giving as much happiness and helpfulness as possible. Fix your heart upon doing these things and be enthusiastic about achieving them, remembering that enthusiasm, interest, and belief in oneself are the genii of sincere accomplishment and the very torch of victory.

Good Listeners

Let Others Talk

I USED to think that a good listener must necessarily be a good talker, a prolific reader, and an informative conversationalist. But I know two very good listeners who "Is that so?" and "I declare!" you to all heights of eloquence, yet, when the conversation depends upon them, they have nothing to say. They listen, but like a trolley car running over a track, their thoughts never stop long enough to make an impression on the rails. They listen, but nothing sinks in. Still, such empty folks are really more comfortable to have around than people who must talk regardless of what there is to say or who there is to listen.

I know a man who came home from ten years' absence and a trip around the world with much to say and but a short time to say it in, for he was to leave in four days on another long voyage, to be gone perhaps ten years longer. His father, when asked the news that the boy brought home, said he heard him make just four statements. And that was true, for every time the son ventured a little detail of his travels, a maiden aunt, much excited at the boy's

return and consequently very loquacious, spoke up with: "And when we went to Niagara Falls." And when he tried to tell of his ocean voyages, auntie started to tell of when she went by boat from Boston to Providence.

Ten years were added to the father's age because of his disappointment. He had dreamed for a long time of the boy's coming home and of hearing of his trips and something of what he was doing. But auntie explained to the neighbors that Will was a quiet fellow and she had to do all the talking, never realizing that to one who has been away a long time there is need of getting acquainted all over again, that the muse must strike a quiet person, and that the situation must be right for conversation.

Surely there is a time to talk and a time to keep still. If one is certain that one can make a more valuable or interesting contribution to the conversation than anyone else, then it is well to talk. But when the days and hours are precious and there's much to be said, smile and listen. Everybody will be glad of it afterward.

Kingdoms of Friendship

Work for Them

CICERO says of friendship: "As for myself, I can only exhort you to look on friendship as the most valuable of human possessions."

I once knew of a family traveling across the country. The little daughter became critically ill. The parents were homeless and in extreme distress. The father sat overpowered with fear of the disease. Then suddenly he remembered that he had a friend.

His face immediately lost its tightness, and he started with his family to drive to a city forty-five miles away. He drove rapidly, while his wife held the sick girl close to her heart to prevent the jar of the wagon from racking out the bit of life that was left. They arrived in the city at four o'clock in the afternoon, and there was the good doctor. "Hello, John! Where in the world—this sick girl yours? Let me see." And with that he picked the little girl up, took her into his house, threw off his coat, opened and rolled up his white stiff cuffs, and went to work.

All night he sat beside the little girl. Every hour the next day and all the next night he watched close for every encouraging sign. And the little girl gradually got well.

The father offered to pay from his slender purse, but the great doctor protested, saying, "Why, my pay is in the saving of the girl. I know how your old heart would ache for the little curly head, and I couldn't bear to think of that. Besides, do you remember all the kind things you did for me when I didn't know enough to take care of myself?"

And so it ended. But the good doctor had made friends to love him always, and they realized that greater than his skill, greater than his manliness, were his appreciation and understanding of human hearts.

* * *

A young man with a wife, a house, furniture to pay for, many guests to entertain, found himself with greater expenses than his salary could meet. Then the dreaded day arrived when debt was the only thing he could see. His heart was with his wife and his home, but lack of reckoning had carried them too far.

One evening an old man, cheaply but neatly dressed, came—dropped in just after supper for a little visit. The next day he returned to the young man and loaned him, without security, two thousand dollars.

"I see you are too near the dam; this will pull you back, and to shore."

The young man could not comprehend why this workman, this old man in overalls, should be so conscious of his need. His joy over the money and his surprise made it impossible for him to question. Later, when the money was all paid back, he asked his benefactor why, and his reply was:

"I know an honest heart, my boy, and you have always been good to me. When my wife died, do you remember, you spoke so kindly and came out to see me; and when I was sick the winter before last, you made me stay home. And do you remember the rubber boots you gave me for Christmas? Then, when I came to see you, you treated me as a friend. And your wife—she loves you. These things told me that my money was safe, and anyway it was only the savings of an old man, and I knew that for the time you could use it better than I."

Was this friendship, love, or affection? Anyway, a kingdom of friendship was built up of three hearts, which even death could not demolish.

* * *

A philosopher of eminent renown knew a young woman ambitious to write. They were friends from the

Kingdoms of Friendship

first. She asked a world of questions and his great heart answered. He gave good encouragement in tutoring, was patient and commending, entirely rebuilding sometimes, but always building a greater castle through his criticism before tearing down the first one.

It would seem that he had given all, and the young woman nothing. But suddenly he discovered that through the ripeness of her questions, through the live, pulsating work that she struggled for, youth came surging into the lines of his own pen and he came to rely on her as much for inspiration as she on him for maturity of judgment.

And so another kingdom was established.

* * *

A little girl ran away from her step-mother, and a friend found it out and went a long distance to recover the girl. She brought her back, kept her for a year, and actually rebuilt a character that had been allowed too much selfishness to grow normally.

When asked why she had done so much for the girl, she replied, "I did it for her own mother."

"But why for her?"

"Well, because a long time ago, when I had to do our washing and wasn't very strong, this girl's mother

always used to slip over when the clothes were ready for the line and hang them up for me. And often on wash day she prepared a nice tray or made lunch for me in her house, and many times while I sewed for her she ironed for me, or when I had company she made the dessert or salad or came and helped with the table. We spent many happy hours together in such comradeship. She would have done much or more for my daughter. Why shouldn't I do for hers?"

* * *

These are homely little incidents with which I am familiar. I know of many others, and the more of them I see and know about as the days go by, the more I realize that great friendships are priceless and ever to be cherished, for they give as much security as joy.

We should always welcome the opportunity to do a thoughtful thing. Thoughtfulness is love's carrier pigeon, bringing to the hearts of our friends continued proof of our permanency and sincerity. We may not understand our neighbors, but we can watch with them for good, and, if we are generous, make them very dear to us and find in the nearness of their friendship the very goal of good fortune.

Builders for Eternity

Stepping Stones

"Isn't it strange that Princes and Kings
And clowns that caper in sawdust rings,
And just plain folks like you and me,
Are builders for Eternity?
To each is given a bag of tools,
A shapeless mass and a book of rules;
And each must make ere life is flown,
A stumbling block, or a stepping stone."

I HEARD a young woman say the other day, "Oh, I give up. What's the use of my trying to be anybody or trying to have nice things? My ambitions only make me restless and miserable."

But we all know that ambitions once entertained are hard to lose. The farther you come from attaining them, the more miserable you will be. Hence the need of continual effort.

To the woman who says, "What's the use?" one might say: "What's the use of working, of washing the dishes, of getting up in the mornings, of liking air and sunshine and pretty things?"

There isn't any real use, perhaps, in it all, but it is, oh so satisfying, to go into a kitchen to cook dinner where everything is happily clean and in place.

What a satisfying, luxurious feeling it is to crawl into a well-made, cozy bed.

What a delight it is to don fresh, clean clothing.

What a self-respecting feeling one has when one puts on a well-made dress that is appropriate and becoming.

All these things take time and effort, but they pay double in sheer pleasure.

And we should use our energies to make happiness come for every effort, pleasure for every thought that we give to family, home, or clothing, and thus make of all our responsibilities stepping stones to success, via happiness.

For surely, when we are happy, we are successful, at least in that little domain where we are queen. No matter what our environment, no

matter what our circumstances—a singing teakettle, a cozy fire, some one to care for, some one to care, a conscience that does not disturb—all these help in our walk up the steps to divine content.

For some of us it may seem a long journey, but trying makes it interesting. And we have the satisfaction all the way of having done our best with our "bag of tools", our "shapeless mass", and "book of rules."

* * *

When I was growing up, I knew many girls to get out of work by not wanting to do it. Sometimes I thought my mother pretty severe because she expected us to wash the dishes. It was part of the work for my sisters and me. She expected us to arrange the table, make the beds, peel the potatoes, help on wash day, and iron the plain things. It never occurred to us to say, "I don't want to do it." I admit many times I didn't really want to, but I should only have made myself ridiculous by saying so.

Self-pity was not scarce with me sometimes, especially when there was an all-absorbing book that I wanted very much to read, or a guest who had interesting things to tell after dinner that I wanted very much to hear, or when the call came on a sleepy morning to get up quick and help with breakfast. But now I realize that *having* to do things, being expected to do them without any alternative, was good for me.

Girls who grow up and take the mother place in the home understand little girls and little boys who don't want to do things. Yet they know from experience that success and a happiness within come from learning, as children, to do the things they don't want to do when they don't want to do them.

Youth in the Heart

Love and Interest

WERE I a lecturer, I should expound much about Happiness, Love, and Truth, because, together, they seem to make a complete circle, in which one could ever live supremely content. But were I to illustrate my circle of Happiness, Love, and Truth, I should make the hub of it Youth—the kind of youth that stays in the heart despite perplexities, despite feeble steps, wrinkles, gray hair, and many birthdays.

Keeping young in heart keeps interest alive, and folks who are truly interested are curious enough to look deep into things. The heart that learns to look deep will find peace instead of discord, and if we are willing we can grow even by grief as we do through happiness.

I heard a wise old Irish philosopher say, "If you want to keep young, don't let your troubles settle in your knees. Sure 'n you can tell the unhappy women by the way they lift their feet. There's no spring in their knees; they drag themselves about, no force within amovin' them."

The force within must be one's very own heart. Don't put weights on your knees. Keep your heart young and free and happy. Look for the good in people, in conditions, in surroundings. Learn to explore a little deeper into the soul of man. Interest yourself in the heart next to you, and your own troubles will melt like icicles in the sunshine. Learn to laugh with people, especially the little folk. Cultivate their source of enthusiasm, for if

you put yourself into the hands of the children, their very interest will keep you young with them. I have often thought that surely one of God's best reasons for giving children to grown-ups and grandchildren to big grown-ups is, through association and interest, to make the grown-up young again.

* * *

When we read of the calamities, misfortunes, unhappiness, and selfishness in the world, we who live simple, commonplace lives wonder, like the simple fellow in the play, "What's all the shootin' for?"

We wonder at it all, and yet we need no one to tell us what is lacking, for we know that if there were love, there would be no hate; if there were honesty, there would be no theft; and if there were sympathy, there would be no cruelty.

A young couple whom I know surprised their friends by becoming divorced. The girl said in explanation, "Why, he wanted me to think about him all the time."

And he said, "She never thought of any one but herself."

If there had been real love between them, the substance of their happiness would have been in thinking and planning, each for the comfort and delight of the other, and both would have been happy.

* * *

Where selfishness is, there is no happiness, for selfishness corrodes and embitters.

Roof Trees

Build Soundly

I HAVE read John Burroughs' essay, "The Roof Tree," many times. It tells us how to build happy homes—the kind that invite us to live contented lives. Every person who is helping a child to a healthy, happy grown-up-ness should read it. It reveals so clearly the importance of careful building, whether the structure be a house or a human soul.

Just as each foundation stone and joist and rafter and door and window and bit of siding and roof is selected with care as to quality of material, and shaped and placed with a thought always of its part in making the finished house beautiful, substantial, and comfortable, so should we strive to choose and shape the principles, desires, motives, and purposes that go into the forming of the character of the developing young life.

Burroughs says, "I notice how eager all men are in building their houses, how they linger about them, or even about their proposed sites. When the cellar is being dug, they want to take a hand in it; the earth evidently looks a little different, a little more friendly and congenial, than other earth. When the foundation walls are up and the first floor is rudely sketched by rough timbers, I see them walking pensively from one imaginary room to another, or sitting a long time wrapped in sweet reverie, upon the naked joist. It is a favorite pastime to go there for a Sunday afternoon and linger fondly about; they take their friends or their neighbors and climb the skeleton stairs and look out of the vacant windows, and pass in and out of the just sketched doorways. How long the house is unfinished! The heart moves in long before the workmen move out."

The young life should interest us more than the skeleton house. We should keep close enough to see the

new joists go up, the windows in, and new supports take their places in the child mind. If we watch close to the building of their characters, the forming of their ideals, the development of courage and poise within them, they will mean more to us when they are grown up. We will love them more unselfishly, understand their motives and purposes better, just as we would appreciate more the house we helped to build.

Knowing children is a gift that comes after a great desire has rested in the heart and when kindness and interest are deeply rooted there. When a mother complains that her children never consider her in any of their plans, it is often, I believe, because her lack of sympathy and understanding automatically shuts her out from their interests, and I have no doubt the fact that they can't take her into their confidences is as great a disappointment to them as to her. Sometimes such unfortunate lack of congeniality makes in all hearts an empty spot that is difficult to fill.

Mothers and fathers should make time for their children. Mothers, especially, should be kind, fair, and happy. The constant "Don't do that" is not healthy, for it cripples the individuality of a child inclined to obey and makes for discredit and disrespect with those who are not so inclined.

A mother's power is very great. A wife can influence, but a mother can build soundly and permanently. She can give her children a heritage of good health and the still greater heritage of a good moral background, which means a substantial heart and a permanently forward thought.

In the divine scheme of harmony, the mother, who knows her children, holds the magic key that locks the door

Roof Trees

against routing squabbles, misunderstood feelings, or corroding resentments. A mother who knows her children, directs and guides them, lives with their questions, but avoids every semblance of criticism. If we must have critics, let them never come in contact with young or old, for it is irritating to both to be told always and continuously what the trouble is, but never how to fix it. God made us all kin and He did not intend that we should find fault with one another, or that we should become so wise or so different as to be unable to appreciate the anguish, curiosity, exuberance, or joy of those with whom we live each day.

High notions about our personal wisdom and exclusiveness, like goggles in the rain, blind us to the road.

If mothers would only realize that it is the minds and hands of humans that make the wheels of commerce go

around, controlling all material strength, they would be inspired to help their children to a healthy, happy maturity, rather than to accept them as burdens of responsibility. No mother knows but that her child could come to be a Lincoln or an Edison.

Visualization is necessary before realization. In these pages, I wish I might encourage every mother to picture an ideal building of the characters of her children, using for the foundation stones, cleanliness; the joists, industry; the siding, kindness; the floor, truth; the windows, individuality; the doors, generosity; the roof, love; and nailing all securely together with courage and sentiment. Then she could know definitely that their Roof Tree would shelter them through every storm of life and find itself set always in that garden of flowers that blooms wherever there be happy hearts.

Incentives

Looking One's Best

WHEN we lose interest in pleasing people, we have lost the greatest incentive for making ourselves attractive.

That is what I thought not long ago while waiting for a friend to join me for luncheon.

As I watched the throngs of women passing by, I wondered what was the incentive that prompted each of them to strive to attain or retain their attractiveness. Pondering this question, I thought of the motives that govern a great majority of women, making them exert themselves to the utmost to look their best. Is it not the hope of winning the attention, admiration, and love of those they hold most dear? And after their love and respect have been won, is it not the desire to retain what has been gained, that makes a woman care to keep herself attractive?

This feeling is not peculiar to any age or condition of womanhood, for it is already well developed in the little girl going to school in kindergarten or primary grade. It is her special delight to wear her best dress and prettiest hair ribbon to win the attention and admiration of the teacher she loves, and whoever saw a little girl that did not love her first teacher?

When the young miss reaches the age at which she feels the impulse to put her hair up and let her skirts down, whom then is she dressing to please? The answer is too obvious. Of course, this is the sweetheart age, and it stimulates, sometimes to extremes, the desire to appear attractive.

As a rule, girls—and boys, too—take the greatest pains with their toilets at this age, spending endless time, energy, and often the entire contents of their purses, in securing clothes to make them look attractive in the beloved's eyes. No artificial

stimulus is required at this stage of life to spur the desire for attractiveness. Nature supplies an all-powerful incentive.

Then when the day of days arrives for a girl and the trousseau is to be selected, only the best and most becoming garments are considered. However, whether the incentive to keep herself attractive will remain with this girl-woman depends much on her character or position in life, or on both. If she is a woman of the true-mother type, she will feel that it is not enough to win the admiration and respect of her mate. She must retain her spiritual and physical attractiveness in order to keep herself young in the eyes of the one she most desires to please. It is not enough to win a thing if we lack the desire or the power to hold what we have gained.

A beautiful woman is rarely, if ever, as gracious as her homely sister, for she feels that her beauty gives her the right of way. But her plainer sister knows that kindness, a pleasing consideration for every one she meets, will help her to make friends, and if she applies to this an intelligent, persistent desire for attractiveness, she is sure to be loved and appreciated.

Appreciation of beauty is one of the attributes of true culture, and the best place to encourage and develop this appreciation is in the home, where love is the protector.

Wives can help their husbands by keeping their attractiveness; mothers can win the admiration of their children and keep them nearer by being always pretty to see; and grandmothers, who have in a delightfully dignified way kept the spirit—the incentive for pleasing—may be such a very real inspiration that their memory will live in the hearts of their loved ones like exquisite music.

Working Cheerfully

A Lightened Load

ONCE, a boy, perhaps sixteen years of age, and small for that, offered to carry two large bags for me. I remarked that I thought them too heavy for him, but he insisted and, with a boy's "braggy-proud" smile, picked them up and walked right off with them.

I asked if he was not young for that kind of work, but he insisted that he was not, that the job paid well, if he hustled, and that was what he liked. He said, "Why, there are a lot of fellows bigger than me and some of 'em never make as much." The boy was happy and bubbling with talk and he said one very true thing, "Folks won't pay you big unless you smile and act like you really want to carry their truck." And I thought, "Sure enough, success is for those who can smile and be cheerful about any load they have to carry, especially when the load belongs to some one else."

If we could only throttle our own selfishness and catch up with our own ambitions so that our energies would parallel our wishes, we would be on the highroad to a wonderfully fruitful and gratifying life.

We often say casually that we wish we could be happy and have good times like other folks. We wish that we could cook delicious foods like some whom we know, or make beautiful clothes. But we spend days and weeks just wishing instead of picking up

the idea smilingly and buckling right down to the hard work of it and achieving the thing we wish for. The golden pot of accomplishment is at the end of every wish rainbow if we but work toward it, then grasp it while the rainbow lingers in our hearts.

The little fellow carrying the bags seemed, at first, not equal to the job, but when he got a good hold and started, he was not thinking over and over about how heavy the bags were, but that soon he would be at his destination. As a result, he had only the bags to carry and not even a tiny bit of his own self-pity, which is indeed the heaviest known thing.

We can find joy in carrying every burden, if, while we bear it, we think not of the load, but of the happiness that awaits us at the end when we lay it down with the satisfaction of work well done.

* * *

If work were a luxury and we could indulge in it like sports, what a clamor there would be to be in the game! And why not make it a great game of effort, inspiration, and profit? If we drag our feet, we wear out our own shoes, no one else's. If we dread our work, we lose the joy we might have. So why not make it a part of the plan to get one hundred per cent. fun and joy out of every day?

For what are we living for, anyway, —worry or happiness?

Appreciation

The Key to Understanding

APPRECIATION is the key to knowledge, the key to art, to literature, to good work. Without it, beauty is not seen nor understood and perfection is never acquired. The woman who does not appreciate the texture, beauty, and service of a piece of cloth will have the most difficult time in making a beautiful garment out of it. The woman who does not appreciate her home and her responsibilities there will never make hers a happy home.

It may be because I am denied the privilege of much time at home that the thought of it is so bright to me. Perhaps, if I had all the crosses that come with each day in the home, I should fail to appreciate the opportunities that are prevalent there and I should see the opportunities not as diamond dollars, but as leaden crosses. But I believe that with the sense of appreciation I have acquired, I should recognize the opportunity that the home actually affords for keeping spirits gay, hearts together, and bodies well nourished. I believe I should practice the little economies that would result in bigger things and set examples that would serve to build character and hold secure that which makes life permanent.

We women all hurry too rapidly through the days, forgetting how big they are and how many times we could touch hands with real happiness if we would but appreciate the opportunity.

A few weeks ago when I was traveling, a woman from across the aisle of the car in which I was riding came over and sat with me. She was a deep-souled person who had lived and

thought and who had a delightful sense of appreciation for humorous, as well as for serious, things. She had been a pioneer in the extreme West. She told me of accomplishments out there—of the women, of church and school difficulties, of community sewing classes, of the inability to procure adequate materials, how one magazine traveled the rounds of all the homes, and how recipes are exchanged and bits of sewing and housekeeping knowledge passed on to the neighbors.

I realized that the charm of the woman was her ability to appreciate life, situations, and opportunities, and to use them all to good effect. She found beauty in the most obscure places, saw good in people, discovered skill in fingers, and evidenced actual delight in every possible service.

Later, this same little lady cuddled a baby for a good two hours so that the mother might rest, and she administered every possible attention to a train-sick traveler. And that evening, in the diner, I heard her remark to her husband that she was not at all tired and had really enjoyed the day's travel. When we changed trains at Buffalo, she remarked that she was always so happy to get to Buffalo because there was so much beauty in the Falls—eleven whole miles away!

My little lady of the train demonstrated that she knew the virtue of perseverance and the value of vision, for her every act, her every word, was for happiness and cheer. She was unselfish, thoughtful in a most intelligent way, and I am sure the brightness of that visit with her will remain with me always.

Real Neighbors

Be One Yourself

THE only difference I have found between Eastern and Western folks is that it takes Eastern neighbors longer to get acquainted.

Out West there is that delightful custom of borrowing something from the new neighbor—an egg, a cup of sugar, a spoonful of tea, or a handful of matches—evidencing that you want to be neighborly, that you welcome the newcomer. Your borrowing invites your neighbor to borrow from you, to drop in informally, and that's the only kind of neighboring worth while. We seldom take time to call next door, though we make a special effort to call on someone three blocks away.

I had a "Little Gray Home in the West" for a few years, and of the definitely happy memories that come again and again, those of my neighbors stand out clearest.

I remember once a neighbor's furnace was "out of kilter." 'Twas cold—a Kansas January. The husband and wife brought their wee baby and visited us for two days. We sewed, cooked, kept house, and at night, when the men folks were home, read aloud, played, sang, and visited as we never had had time to do before.

Once, when an economical streak struck me and I decided to dye my wedding dress, white to tan, a neighbor across the street, wife of a police officer, saw me coming from the drug store with a dye package and volunteered to help. She had had much experience and real success with dyeing. I learned more from her that morning than I could have learned in a half dozen attempts alone. She took her time; we had a good visit; and the dyeing was a success. I only thanked her, yet the information she gave me has been valuable these fifteen years.

One of the jolliest times I ever had was when a neighbor's maid failed to appear when special guests had been invited for dinner. I helped to cook the dinner and serve it, all dressed up in an apron and a lace handkerchief folded in half for a cap. As the salad was approaching, one of the guests began talking about my husband, about how they went to school together, and how he just had to see him. We all spent a happy evening together and had much fun, once the secret was out.

Days when I was sewing, my neighbors would bring pie, baked beans, scalloped potatoes, soup, always something for dinner, so that I could stay at my work longer. One neighbor, whose husband came home for lunch, would often send a delicious plate lunch to me. All I could ever do for her was help her get sleeves in right, miter square yokes, hang hems, and lend her my dress form. But she did a lot for me, for now as the years go by I can look back with treasured happiness to the days when I had the joy of being home and of having real honest-to-goodness neighbors.

If folks obey the Golden Rule on both sides, there is sure to be a happy neighborhood that will provide all with an enviable store of memories—memories of homey friendships to last a lifetime.

Life is too short to be stingy with; days are too precious to let drift by without the touch of a friendly heart-string some place, somewhere. And the surest way to make the best of the days is to try to be good friends with your neighbors. They may not think as you do nor have the same standards, but this is a sure rule—you can help them or they can help you, and a give-and-take spirit is a wonderful thing.

Hurt Feelings

Don't Cuddle Them

I HAVE lived through many hurt feelings, especially with relatives, and I realize with every experience that it is better to talk things over right at the beginning, to put personal feelings entirely aside, to compromise some way, and, if possible, to compromise so diplomatically that both persons may feel that they have had their own way about it.

Persons who have a hurt "bottled up" within carry a heavy load; if we love them, we will talk it out and save them from their self-inflicted unhappiness. Observations show that ninety-five out of every one hundred persons are kindly disposed and sincere. Where love exists, this percentage is greater, and where love exists, there should never be, among thinking people, a question of motive. But people must be frank and speak out, must say how they feel; then their folks and friends will know what to expect. They will not be like the man and wife who, living in the same house for eight years, ceased to speak to each other and who are now totally disagreed as to what the

original trouble was; neither can remember definitely what it all started about.

I know a man who says of his sister, "It's just about time for her to have a pouty spell and the least thing will set her off." That is true of too many people, who persist in making more misery for themselves than for any one else.

Folks careless about other persons' feelings, shouldn't be worried about; and those who really care never intend to hurt. So why should one worry or be unhappy? A little frankness sometimes makes it necessary for one to develop a little more personal independence and this may perchance prove to be a good thing.

I say, if you have a grievance, hang it out and let the kindly wind of friendliness blow out all the wrinkles. If you have an idea, find an opportune time, and work to have the interested one become interested in it.

But don't pout, don't cuddle grievances, and at all times and under all circumstances, use common sense.

Proud of Patches

Partners in Everything

ONCE a little fellow asked, "Why do folks wait till New Years to start in being good?" And as I thought of the people who start New Year's Day with all manner of resolutions and in thirty days forget all about them, the thought occurred, "Why make iron-clad resolutions that will tear one's pride when they are dropped? Instead, why not plan progressive achievements for all the New Year?"

To write out all the possible good things you hope to do, or accomplish, during the year is interesting. But the vital part of such a procedure comes when you have the list in your desk or dresser drawer and every once in a while during the year read it over to remind yourself of your promises. And this hustling to keep up with your own schedule is the greatest fun. It's just like having a partner that you could not possibly disappoint."

And this brings to my mind a thought about partners. The other day, a dear little lady with a radiant face—a mother of four little tots, all so small that it was a real problem for her to get down town even for an afternoon—came into our offices. As she talked, I found actual happiness in just anticipating what a splendid partner she is to her husband and what an inspiring companion she is for her children. She told me how she managed to study in order to be informed about things and to keep up her sewing while doing all her own housework and laundering.

I occasionally think that I am extremely busy; there are times when I defy any woman to say that she has more to do than I. But this little mother takes more steps and does more every day than I do, and her face tells that keeping busy makes for happiness and doing little constructive things to help others makes for contentment. I know that my happiest days are my very busiest ones, and I'm sure this little mother finds her happiness in being busy. I just know her heart is fairly bursting with plans for her family—that every hour of the day finds her thinking of the little homey things she can do to add to their comfort or of how she can instil in her children the teachings that will develop them into fine citizens for the future.

I know she teaches principles, for the blouse of one of her little boys, who asked to remove his coat, had very neat patches on the elbows. As the mother talked to me about her sewing difficulties and successes, he turned his arm to me and said, "See, my mamma did that." And the mother explained, "You know Ray's father's salary has not increased with prices. We used to worry about it, but now I'm just determined that we will be proud of our patches. The children and I have formed a little 'P-of-P Club' all our own, 'P of P' meaning 'Proud of Patches.' I tell them that if we did not know how to patch or were too indolent to patch we could not possibly belong to this club. So we think even that is something to be happy about."

Tolerance

With Charity Toward All

TOLERANCE in a young person is not essential. Joy should dominate—the spirit of adventure and wholeheartedness sway all else. But as age sifts its experiences through the heart, there should come a natural tolerance and understanding that measure with mother tenderness the weaknesses, the heights and depths, of the spirit of humanity.

Old people who have loved, who have given of their heart interest, are never bitter. Time has tempered them and clarified their vision regarding motives, so that they see weaknesses and mistakes with clear-eyed kindness and have an appreciative understanding for all who experience either failure or success.

A man who knows no tolerance in his own heart always seems to want to jeer, to insinuate that the method of every success is faulty, that fate has dealt with him unfairly, that he is as bright, has worked as hard, and is as deserving as his neighbor, forgetting that this very line of thinking digs for him his own well of disappointment.

An intolerant woman always seems to find gossip necessary and to as-

sume the “I-don’t-see-how-they-did-it” attitude, insisting that all success is achieved by unvirtuous or dishonest means. To see such a woman and to realize that she has allowed her birthright to slip away from her, is tragedy itself.

Are individuals to blame for such unfortunate jealousies and narrowness? Perhaps not entirely. But each disappointment that is taken as a personal misfortune, makes for bitterness—it is like fruit juice that turns to vinegar instead of wine.

It is so very easy to evidence appreciation; it is so tedious and self-stinting to condemn and criticize. Friendly approval, appreciation of the motive, a desire really to understand, will build materially a tolerant spirit that will open up a new world not only for us but in the hearts of humans all around, and will sweeten for us, as nothing else can, the years that otherwise would be bleak and lonely.

And, after all, what is life but that which helps us to understand and appreciate and feel akin to the heart next to us?

Wholesome Living

Healthy Development

I WAS once by accident in a studio filled with cheap theatrical people—the burlesque type. There were girls half-dressed, smoking, lounging, caressing the men, and men kissing them as they passed. There were dirt, ill temper, and a reckless “don’t-care” spirit evident everywhere. I felt terrorized, like the man who, assigned to photographing inmates in an insane asylum, when lunch time and a moment of freedom came, ran down the street to the first mirror he could find to see whether he looked as did the people he had been photographing.

When I left this studio den I, too, wanted to find a mirror to see whether I evidenced the hard indifference, the utter lack of sympathy of those whom I had seen.

The very next day I was asked to serve as adjudicator at an eisteddfod—a singing festival celebrated by the Welsh people. As I saw the groups of children reciting, playing, singing, singly and in groups, with their earnest little faces lifted up in serious interest, daring to do their best, eager to please, the little curtsies of the girls, the manly

straightawayness of the boys, I felt that here were stability, cleanness, sincerity, and effort, all working together for good.

In the unclean studio, there were only about twenty. In one of the choruses of children of eight to twelve years, there were three hundred. One place made me ashamed, unhappy; the other made me glad and proud. And why? Those lovely children told more definitely than words that there are mothers here and all over our country, working for beauty in their children, for healthy, normal development that will make for permanency of character and affection. Such little folks can lift up their faces and sing and rejoice.

There is a difference between people who respect the rules of decency, honor, and faith and those who disregard them, a difference that should impel every mother to encourage her children in wholesome living and thinking, to teach them to revere that which is right, and to be proud of their innocence rather than of their sophistication. One is sunshine; the other, mold.

Seeds of Unselfishness

Roses of Achievement

THE word *achievement* first took root in my consciousness when I heard a talented and great-hearted man say, "Achievement is the parent of sincere desire." I turned that statement over many times before I agreed that it is entirely true. My trend of thinking had been that we must first desire a thing before we would even set about to achieve it, but we can disprove that by the most elementary reasoning. For instance, with the first evidence of individuality in a child comes an effort for achievement. A step is accomplished, and immediately the desire is created to try another; then two and three follow until the legs are strong enough to carry the body in motion.

All through life, as achievements are realized, desire is stimulated, and those who travel farthest are those who realize that great things are not accomplished by idle dreams or selfish motives, but by high appreciation, earnest effort, and patient and applicable study.

To associate the word achievement with unselfishness seems the right thing, because real achievements, those which are permanent and lasting, must have their conception in unselfishness. Artist and teacher, philanthropist and minister, all must evidence extreme unselfishness to achieve heights in service.

But the highest achievements are reached by our mothers, for from them is exacted the greatest unselfishness and for them comes the greatest reward. Not long ago we were talking about this, and some one said, "Well, I've never been able to see where a mother has so much glory—always seems to me like a lot of sacrifice and hard work." Then it seemed the entire group arose in retaliation

of this statement. Thoughts were turned round and light focused upon all the mothers we knew, and with every real mother we found a happy heart, perhaps traces of much suffering and unhappiness, but a soul made rich and hands made tender through that very service.

Measuring achievements by individual standards or mile posts seems almost a shameful thing to do, and especially if the measurements tend to a recognition of material success. Having things to do with and money to spend is a satisfaction, but having some one to save for and plan with is real happiness.

A wonderful mother said to me recently, "Sometimes I can scarcely understand myself. Only a few years ago, I had great ambitions to achieve success in business, and now I am perfectly content with just taking care of three babies, my husband, and our house." I realized, for I know her well, that she had not stopped being a success; rather, she had taken a bigger, broader road than that of business and had become a Rose of Glory instead of a stationary trellis, as she might have been had business kept her interest.

If every mother could consider herself as a gardener in God's own garden, tending His roses, cultivating them, caring for them, keeping all the weeds and destructive things away, I am sure that being a mother would seem much more glorious. Often we get too close to real beauty to appreciate its magnificance. I wonder if that is why mothers sometimes grow tired and impatient—never getting far enough away from their own bit of garden to appreciate how truly wonderful it is.

Merchants take inventory at certain intervals in order to know just what

Seeds of Unselfishness

they possess and what they need. I have often wondered why it would not be a happy thing for our mother folk to take inventory to see just how precious their little live possessions are so that they could make them even more precious.

Helping little folks to achieve speech, good manners, and unselfishness, putting into their hearts appreciation of life and all the good for which it stands, calls forth unselfishness in abundance, but results in the highest of achievements.

I know a dear woman who has occasion to be very sad, but her cheerfulness is magnificent. She is so unselfish as to consider it actually wrong to allow

any one to think of her grief. To see her is to appreciate thoroughly her sheer dexterity in concealment and to experience shame in having ever confessed a grievance. This woman possesses a true mother's greatest charm—unselfishness. To be in her presence is to realize the strength of her character and to love her for the happiness she manifests.

If I were so fortunate as to be an unselfish mother, a gardener in God's garden, I'd plant an abundance of happiness and I'd cultivate it with all my might, for I know for a certainty that seeds of unselfishness bring buds of happiness that blossom forth into glorious roses of Achievement.

Christmas Kindliness

The Thoughtful Gift

THE other night I sat with some friends, turning hems on some lovely, soft, white linen Christmas handkerchiefs. As the threads were drawn and the tiny hems turned, many thoughts came about Christmas giving.

Memories of old-time Christmases, snow-covered fields, long paths, star-studded skies, and the mysterious reindeers and Santa Claus that you yourself visualized into being—all these came fast to mind.

And then came the Christmas lesson of Jesus and the manger and the simplicity of the first Christmas. And these thoughts brought the realization that Christmas, instead of extravagant giving, should be a time of loving companionship, of tender memories, and of happily sympathetic appreciation of those we hold dear as friends and loved ones.

Christmas time should be wreathed in kindness and candled with loving tenderness. The lonely heart should be sought and made to realize that there is unselfishness and that there is love at Christmas time. The person who is of good cheer at Christmas, who really enjoys "Merry Christmas," who delights in the planning, making, buying, and tying of Christmas packages is the one who has the best happiness and the most fun.

To receive a gift is not half such good fortune as to know real happiness in planning and giving one, especially if one is thoughtful enough to think up and procure something that even the "impossible" gift-receiver will be delighted with. It always seems a mark of laziness for any one to say, "Oh, I haven't any idea what to give them because they are so hard to buy for," or "They have everything."

Giving gifts in this way is a responsibility and this is a thing that should

not enter into Christmas giving, for we should love or appreciate the persons to whom we give gifts enough to plan something that will comfort or delight them. Usually, the trouble is that we want the gift to seem sumptuous or generous, and we overlook the thoughtful thing that will be appreciated.

As a child I remember a dear old lady who was greatly loved, outwardly for her delicious cookies and shining apples that she always had on hand for the children who visited her, and divinely for the loving spirit that made her plan to have these things ready when the eager-eyed little folks came. This old treasure woman seldom went to town, for her egg and butter money would not go far in buying gifts for all whom she delighted to remember.

Instead, she saved all the tin foil that came to her throughout the year and covered big luscious hickory nuts with it. Also, she made tiny bars of candied popcorn and wrapped them in bits of colored tissue-paper; she made old-fashioned molasses drops; and baked delicious cookies for her little friends. These little packages perhaps amounted to no more than five or six cents in cost, but I know several of these children, now grown up, who treasure the thought that inspired them more than any gifts they have ever received.

This same woman, in early November each year, made lovely fruit cake; then at Christmas she cut it up into squares or loaves, and iced each one beautifully with "my Christmas icing," as she would say, which was white and soft and generously plentiful. On top she placed a holly leaf with a berry or two. These packages of fruit cake were not much as gifts, but they were worth their weight in gold for the Christmas love and thoughtfulness they carried, and after all that is Christmas.

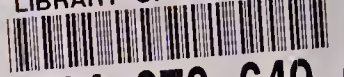
Christmas Kindliness

Big, expensive, oftentimes impractical gifts are a financial problem to the giver and a real responsibility for the recipient, for it is embarrassing to have gifts from those who you know have made a real sacrifice, and who put you

under a distinct feeling of obligation.

The gift's responsibility is not to express money, but thoughtfulness. It should bring joy and tenderness to the hearts of all who are privileged to give and to receive.

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